07/26/2007

HOUSE APPROVES $2 MILLION FOR RESEARCH ON THE GREAT LAKES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) announced today that the House of Representatives has approved his request for $2 million in next year’s transportation appropriations bill for research into invasive species and maritime commerce on the Great Lakes.

â€œThe Great Lakes maritime industry contributes greatly to our economy and is a vital source of good-paying jobs for the region, so it’s

important that we fully understand the forces affecting it, and are constantly searching for better ways to take care of it,â€ said Obey, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. â€œThat's why I requested funding for ballast water research and for the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute in next year's budget and I'm glad that the House agreed.â€

At Obey's request, the House approved:

- $1 million for ballast water research being conducted at UW-Superior as part of the American Great Lakes Ports Association's Great Ships Initiative to more aggressively confront the introduction of invasive species in the ballast water of ocean-going vessels that visit Great Lakes ports. The initiative aims to increase monitoring of Great Lakes ports and accelerate the identification and verification of treatment tools.

- $1 million for the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute, a joint effort by the University of Wisconsin-Superior and the University of Minnesota-Duluth. GLMRI is dedicated to developing and improving economically and environmentally sustainable maritime commerce on the Great Lakes through applied research. The funding will be used to coordinate, conduct and disseminate the Institute's research.

However, the transportation appropriations bill must still be approved by the Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law, Obey warned. â€œBut having these funds included in the House passed bill means that a major hurdle has been cleared,â€ he concluded.